

The Life Without and Within

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT AND THE LIFE OF TO-DAY. By Evelyn Underhill. E. P. Dutton & Co.

A PERIOD of external turmoil always causes humanity to look within and seek the inner light. The Thirty Years War in Germany was a period when men searched their own souls. We have abandoned old formulas, but the quest after spiritual enlightenment has been accelerated by the war. Miss Underhill is one of the ablest students of mysticism. She is well fitted to interpret its message in terms of the modern world. For this reason she was chosen to give the inaugural course of a lectureship in religion, established at Manchester College, Oxford, under the will of the late Prof. Upton.

Miss Underhill realizes that the spoken word is not always as effective on paper. She has preserved the essential substance of these lectures, but revised them thoroughly. Part of the fourth chapter appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* under the title "Suggestion and Religious Experience." A section of the eighth chapter appeared in the *Hibbert Journal*. Her preface explains her method of treatment. She says: "Since my subject is not the splendor of historic sanctity, but the normal life of the spirit, as it may be and is lived in the here-and-now, I have done my best to describe the character and meaning of this life in the ordinary terms of present day thought, and with little or no use of the technical language of mysticism. Readers of these pages will find nothing about trances, ecstasies and other rare psychic phenomena; which sometimes indicates holiness and sometimes only disease."

Miss Underhill opened her lectures by speaking on the "Characters of Spiritual Life." She pointed out that this generation is questing for new truth. She feels, however, that our development is one-sided. She says: "Our spiritual life, to-day, such as it is, tends above all to express itself in social activities. Is such a view complete? Have we not lost the wonder and poetry of the forest in our diligent cultivation of the economically valuable trees?" She would have us supplement our good works by meditation.

In her second lecture, "History and the Life of the Spirit," Miss Underhill explains the fundamental unity of such experience. She says: "Hindu, Buddhist, Egyptian, Greek, Alexandrian, Moslem and Christian all declare with more or less completeness a way of life, a path, a curve of development, which shall end in its attainment; and history brings us face to face with the real and human men and women who have followed this way, and found its promise to be true." She takes Richard Rolle, the so-called "father of English mysticism," as a type of the God intoxicated person. She shows that his experiences were not wholly a product of his environment and that he laid hold on certain truths which are valid to-day.

In two lectures Miss Underhill examines the spiritual life in terms of modern psychoanalysis. In the first of these lectures she shows that the analysis of mind is the same in both. The terminology is different. Man has two antagonistic natures. St. Paul called them the old Adam and the new Adam. Freud calls them the subconscious and the conscious. Healthy life demands that the conflict between them be solved. In her second lecture on "Spiritual Life and Psychoanalysis" Miss Underhill shows that the mystics by contemplation and suggestion employed an essentially modern and sound technique.

Miss Underhill discusses the life of the spirit in the individual, the life of the spirit and education, institutional religion and the life of the spirit, and the life of the spirit and the social order. She criticizes the over emphasis upon social duties, and says: "Forgetting St. Teresa's warning that to give our Lord a perfect service Martha and Mary must combine, we represent the service of man as being of itself an attention to God; and thus drain our best workers of their energies and leave them no leisure for taking in fresh supplies. Often they are wearied and confused by the multiplicity in which they must struggle; and they are not encouraged and taught to seek the healing experience of unity. Hence even our noblest teachers often show painful signs of spiritual exhaustion and tend to relapse into the formal repetition of a message which was once a burning fire."

the University of Rome and is fairly entitled to be hailed as an original thinker. The application of his tenets to education results in a plea for spirituality in teaching. "The only culture that can be be-

stowed," he says, "is idealistic culture. Culture in the abstract, as dead history, is dead. . . . It is not possible to conceive knowledge otherwise than as living knowl-

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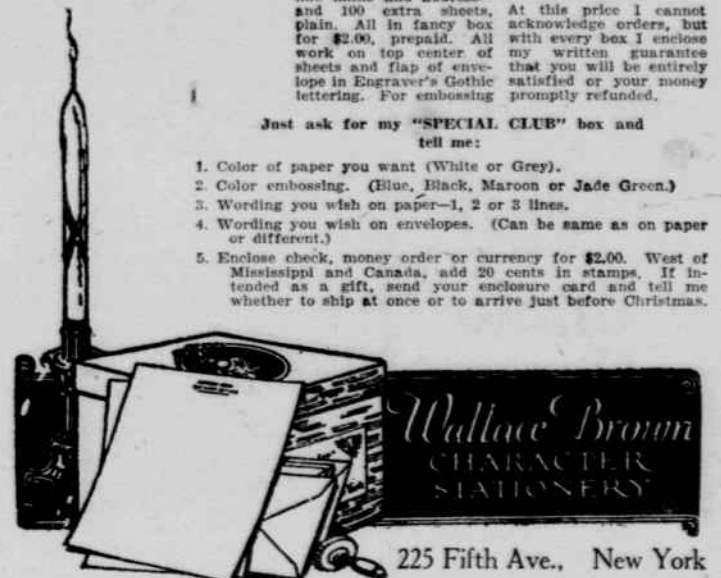
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225 Fifth Ave., New York

Educational Theories

NATIONALISM AND EDUCATION SINCE 1789. By Edward H. Reisner. The Macmillan Company.

THE REFORM OF EDUCATION. By Giovanni Gentile. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

"THERE seems to have been in this country," says Prof. Reisner, "a noticeable change during and since the war to a more conscious effort to inculcate patriotism through school subjects." It may be traced back to a period twenty years or more earlier; as far back as 1890 foreseeing educators and critics of national life began to see the function of the school more definitely than before as a training for citizenship. But it is only recently that, as Prof. Reisner says, "Scientific history has come in for sharp criticism on the part of many persons, who are urging a frankly pragmatic use of the materials of history." And this, as he points out, tends toward the vicious Prussian attitude and practice of the era since 1870. The proper place of nationalism in education is a difficult matter to settle. It is obviously capable of dangerous abuse, but it is equally plain that it cannot be safely ignored or excluded. Prof. Reisner's detailed study of this factor in modern education, in theory and practice in France, Prussia, England and the United States since the era of the French Revolution, is a contribution of importance to the subject.

He approaches it, broadly, with as much as possible in short compass, of the necessary general social, economic and political background sketched in. Space limits forbid any detailed resume of his study, but it may be noted that, apparently, the French have made the best conscious adjustment of schooling to the needs of the case, whereas the Prussian method, it hardly needs to be said, became unduly provocative and even destructive in its results. England has more or less ignored the problem; partly because, having been a homogeneous nation for at least four hundred years, she felt small need of nationalist

propaganda. The United States is only beginning to sense the problem. While not unduly optimistic Prof. Reisner seems to think that the educational reconstruction now going on (clumsily, it must be admitted) may result in better use of the "social studies," to the end of giving the child "information that will serve for making sound judgments in regard to matters of public policy."

Prof. Gentile's admirable philosophic study of idealism in educational theory (well translated by Dino Bigongiari of Columbia) also has a certain content of what may be called nationalism, but is, furthermore, something of a corrective to the somewhat utilitarian tendencies indicated by Prof. Reisner's analyses. Gentile may be paired with Senator Croce as one of the twin luminaries of modern Italian thought. He is professor of philosophy at

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